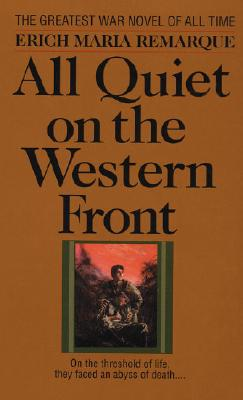
Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_



All Quiet on the Western Front Quotes

**QUOTE 1**

“For us lads of eighteen they ought to have been mediators and guides to the world of maturity . . . to the future . . . in our hearts we trusted them. The idea of authority, which they represented, was associated in our minds with a greater insight and a more humane wisdom. But the first death we saw shattered this belief. We had to recognize that our generation was more to be trusted than theirs . . .. The first bombardment showed us our mistake, and under it the world as they had taught it to us broke in pieces.”

**Quote 2**

“Comrade, I did not want to kill you. . . . But you were only an idea to me before, an abstraction that lived in my mind and called forth its appropriate response. . . . I thought of your hand-grenades, of your bayonet, of your rifle; now I see your wife and your face and our fellowship. Forgive me, comrade. We always see it too late. Why do they never tell us that you are poor devils like us, that your mothers are just as anxious as ours, and that we have the same fear of death, and the same dying and the same agony—Forgive me, comrade; how could you be my enemy?

**Quote 3**

“Just as we turn into animals when we go up to the line . . . so we turn into wags and loafers when we are resting. . . . We want to live at any price; so we cannot burden ourselves with feelings, which, though they may be ornamental enough in peacetime, would be out of place here. Kemmerich is dead, Haie Westhus is dying . . . Martens has no legs anymore, Meyer is dead, Max is dead, Beyer is dead, Hammerling is dead . . . it is a damnable business, but what has it to do with us now—we live.”

Explanation- quote 1

This quotation from Chapter One constitutes Paul’s first and most direct exploration of how the older generation betrays the younger generation by convincing them to sacrifice their lives for the empty ideals of patriotism and honor. Paul says that authority figures from the older generation—parents, leaders, teachers such as Kantorek—should have been wise guides to the future and that, as boys, the young soldiers all assumed that they would be. But after the war began, the soldiers realized that the older generation had failed them, and Paul reacts to this failure with anger and disdain. He emphasizes that the older generation, which is constantly ready to criticize and ostracize young men for signs of cowardice or unpatriotic behavior but has not itself experienced the war, has no understanding of what the fighting is actually like. The younger generation must look to themselves to determine what is true and right because the older generation has proved itself incapable of teaching them.

Explanation- quote 2

Paul utters these words in Chapter Nine to the corpse of Gérard Duval, the French soldier whom he has just killed. Paul realizes for the first time that, despite the dictates of nationalism, Duval is fundamentally no different from him. As Duval becomes a fully realized person in Paul’s mind, as he thinks beyond the man’s weapons to “your wife and your face and our fellowship,” Paul observes, as he does in Chapter Eight among the Russian prisoners, that the war has forced men who are not enemies to fight each other. The propaganda campaigns waged by the opposing governments have convinced many men that their opponents are evil; as such, Paul initially conceives of the French soldier as “an abstraction”—the enemy. Once he understands Duval as a human being, the artificial divisions between the two men become irrelevant. Paul’s sympathy for Duval’s suffering is evident in his address of him as “comrade” and his reference to himself and Duval as “we” and “us,” in opposition to the “they”—those in power, who attempt to deny the essential sameness of men such as Paul and Duval.

Explanation- quote 3

In this grim passage from Chapter Seven, Paul discusses the psychological process of how a soldier disconnects himself from his feelings in order to survive the terror of the war. After the bloody fighting, Paul and his friends are lying about enjoying a moment of relaxation and leisure, and have pushed their recent horrific experiences out of their minds. Paul says that terror can be survived only if one avoids thinking about it; otherwise, feelings of grief, fear, and despair would drive a man mad. Paul even looks upon those feelings with contempt, calling them “ornamental enough during peacetime” and implying that they are superfluous luxuries rather than essential components of the human experience. To help the reader understand the pressure that is always upon the soldier, Paul presents his appalling list of recent casualties, friends, and comrades who were either killed or badly injured in recent fighting. There is even a grotesque poetry to the list with the alliteration and rhyme of the names Martens, Meyer, Max, and Beyer, demonstrating the stoic attitude that Paul claims is necessary for survival.